

## **“Single Married Divorced or Widowed,” Part 1 - 1 Corinthians 7:1-2 – January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

- Today's teaching will be part one of a new series I've titled, "Single Married Divorced or Widowed."
- Once again the chapter before us deals with very sensitive and mature subject matter, and as such, I will teach it carefully and prayerfully.
- Before we jump into today's teaching, I think it's important to mention that chapter seven marks a turning point of sorts in this first epistle.

- This because, from chapter seven on through the rest of the book, Paul answers specific questions in a letter the Corinthians had sent him.
- It seems that they were confused concerning how they as Christians were to conduct themselves in a culture riddled with sexual immorality.
- To their credit they wanted to know what was right and wrong when it came to their sex lives whether single, married, divorced or widowed.

Of this one commentator wrote, "There were two main views going around in the church in Corinth. One was that sex doesn't affect your spiritual life so you can do whatever you like. The other was that sex is sinful and is to be avoided as an activity of Satan. Paul has to steer between the two. ...In an immoral society, the Christian answer is not to ban sex and avoid marriage. Paul advises those who marry to have a wholehearted sex life—each knowing that they share their body with their partner."

- Be that as it may, for those of you who read ahead to stay ahead, you've probably already noticed that this chapter is a very long chapter.
- With 40 verses in it you sort of get the impression and rightfully so that these are delicate matters requiring an explanation and clarification.
- As we'll see in this series true to form the Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, is going to do exactly that, as he provides very practical answers.

- It's for this reason I decided to teach this chapter by asking 10 questions that Paul will answer for couples, singles, divorcees, and widows.
- Namely, from questions about sex within marriage, issues that arise when one is not a believer in the marriage and everything in between.
- Enter our first question, which is so foundational, in the sense that it is germane to our understanding of why these are such serious issues.

### **1. Why is sex so perverted? (Verses 1-2)**

1 Now for the matters you wrote about: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." 2 But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband.

- v1 Paul responds to this letter they wrote him in which they asked about whether or not it's okay for a man and woman to have sex together.
- v2 His answer; since sexual immorality is occurring each man should have sex with his wife and his wife should have sex with her husband.
- At first read one might get the impression that they were asking whether or not it was okay for couples that were not married to have sex.

- However, upon a closer examination, it becomes clear that what they're really asking is if they can have sex together as husband and wife.
- Here's why, because sexual immorality was so rampant in the Corinthian culture they were questioning whether or not to have sex at all.
- Thankfully Paul clears this up by saying that yes, a husband should have sex with his wife, and the wife should have sex with her husband.

- Lest you think this would be a firm grasp of the obvious, let me hasten to say that this same lie and confusion is alive and well modern day.
- Sadly, the devil himself, who is the father of lies and the author of confusion, has perverted the beauty and purity of God's design for sex.
- He's succeeded on two fronts, the first of which is the blatant, by way of rampant pornography, which alone has destroyed sex in marriage.

- The second way he's succeeded is subtler, such that it comes by way of the false teaching that being single or celibate is more spiritual.

Of this one commentator wrote, "The idea that marriage was a less holy state than celibacy, naturally led to the conclusion that married persons ought to separate, and it soon came to be regarded as an evidence of eminent spirituality when such a separation was final."

- I would suggest that by virtue of how Satan hates every aspect of the Christian marriage, he would do everything and anything to destroy it.
- I'll take it a step further and say that when it comes to the sexual aspect of the Christian marriage, Satan's strategy is to mar it and dirty it.
- I'm of the belief that he successfully implements this strategy long before marriage by way of premarital sex, and God forbid abusive sex.

- He does this so that when they get married their sex life at best, will be far less than God's best, and at worst a reminder of the unthinkable.
- Perhaps this is what explains those sexless Christian marriages that end up becoming yet another divorce statistic that Satan celebrates.
- And, Satan never stops there; his all out assault on the institution of marriage has been met with success by legalizing same sex marriage.

- This begs the question of why it is that Satan is on what seems to be an insatiable quest to destroy marriage and every aspect of marriage.
- More specifically, the sexual aspect of marriage. For the answer to this question, we need look no further than to what this all represents.
- Marriage, and the family unit are a microcosm of the Christian's relationship to Jesus Christ, Who is our Bridegroom, and we are His bride.

- I point this out because when we understand the significance of marriage, we'll better appreciate why there's such an attack on marriage.
- Simply put, the satanic attack on marriage and sexual fulfillment in marriage portrays God as a killjoy Who doesn't want us to have any fun.
- The fact of the matter is it's the exact opposite that's true such that, God designed marriage and the gift of sex to be thrilling and fulfilling.

I'll close with a quote from a book I have in my library titled, "Sins of the Body: Ministry in a Sexual Society," "...it is very interesting to note that in the Sex in America Survey, one of the largest studies released in the last decade of American sexual practices, married couples reported considerably higher rates of sexual satisfaction than singles, ...These secular researchers made the following comments that support the contention that marriage is the best environment to experience sex, and reserving sex for marriage can in fact enhance future marital satisfaction. They comment on their findings: Those having the most partnered sex and enjoying it the most are the married people. The young single people who fly from partner to partner and seem to be having a sex life that is satisfying beyond most people's dreams are, it seems, mostly a media creation. In real life, the unheralded, seldom discussed world of married sex is actually the one that satisfies most people." The author goes on to conclude, "As strange as it sounds to modern ears, sex before marriage is morally wrong because God prohibits it. But God did not prohibit premarital sex because he is whimsical or mean. As the almighty, holy creator, he has the right to dictate human sexual behaviour. As a loving creator, his commandments are always for our good. God prohibits premarital sex, not because sex is bad, but because it is such a precious and powerful gift. God knows that reserving sex for marriage enhances the gift, builds personal and relational health, and protects us from harm. Oh that more [Christians] would experience the goodness of God in their sex lives!